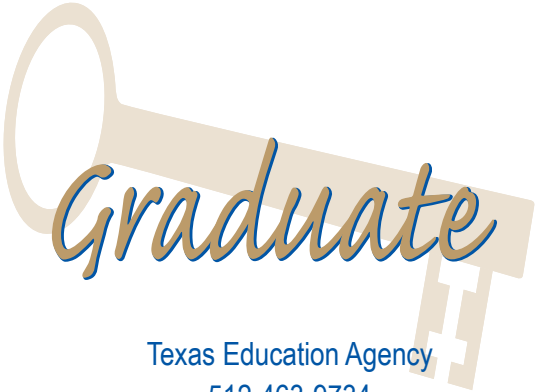


# Did you know that...

- the **highest ranking graduate** at each Texas public high school **receives a certificate** from the Texas Education Agency **that can be used** as a scholarship **to cover tuition costs** at any Texas public college or university?
- students ranked in **the top 10 percent of** their **graduating class** from an accredited public or private Texas high school **are eligible for automatic admission to any Texas public university** if they have completed the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement Plan?
- **students can earn college credit** while still in high school **by taking** advanced placement courses **and passing** the advanced placement tests **or by enrolling in and passing** dual credit courses?
- a **college graduate** will have **average lifetime earnings twice that of a high school graduate?**



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# Graduation Requirements for Texas Students

Beginning with the incoming freshman class of 2007–08, high school students that pursue the Recommended High School Program or the Distinguished Achievement Program must earn 26 course credits to graduate, including four credits each in math, science, social studies, and English language arts.

Students can take the 22-credit Minimum High School Program only if approved by their parent(s) or guardian and a school official.

Students must pass their classes as well as all four sections of the exit level Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in order to receive a diploma and graduate from a Texas public high school.

Students first take the exit level TAKS in the spring of their junior year.

The exit level TAKS includes math, science, social studies, and English language arts. These tests are based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS, which are the curriculum standards (or broad curriculum requirements) that teachers use every day in the classroom as the basis for instruction.

Students will have five opportunities prior to their graduation to take and pass the four exit level TAKS tests; however, passing these tests in their junior year is preferable.

Be sure to check with your local district, which may have additional graduation requirements.

# Why Go to College?

As you make your plans for the future, continuing your education with either a two-year or four-year college degree is recommended.

## Consider These Facts:

- 56 percent of jobs today require some college.
- 80 percent of the jobs projected to grow the fastest over this decade require some education after high school.
- Dropping out of high school or failing to earn a college degree severely limits a student's employment options and earning potential.
- A college graduate makes twice as much on average as a student who has only a high school diploma.
- Adults who stay in school longer are more likely to have good health, volunteer in their communities, and exercise their right to vote.

## Earnings\* over a lifetime with a college degree:

Professional degree .....	\$4.4 million
Master's degree .....	\$2.5 million
Bachelor's degree .....	\$2.1 million
Associate's degree .....	\$1.6 million

*\*Source: US Census Bureau*

# Distinguished Achievement

26 Credits Required

<b>English Language Arts</b> .....	<b>4.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>English I, II, III, &amp; IV</li><li>Immigrant students with limited English proficiency may substitute <i>English I and II for Speakers of Other Languages</i> for English I and II.</li></ul>	
<b>Math</b> .....	<b>4.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and a fourth math course for which Algebra II is a prerequisite</li></ul>	
<b>Science</b> .....	<b>4.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Biology, Chemistry, and Physics plus an additional lab-based course</li></ul>	
<b>Social Studies</b> .....	<b>3.5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>World History Studies (1.0),</li><li>World Geography Studies (1.0),</li><li>U.S. History Studies Since Reconstruction (1.0), and</li><li>U.S. Government (0.5)</li></ul>	
<b>Economics</b> .....	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Physical Education</b> .....	<b>1.5</b>
to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Foundations of Personal Fitness (0.5 with a limit of 2.0 credits)</li><li>Can substitute drill team, marching band, cheerleading, JROTC, athletics, Dance I-IV, approved private programs, or certain career and technology education courses</li></ul>	
<b>Languages other than English</b> .....	<b>3.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any three levels in the same language</li></ul>	
<b>Health Education</b> .....	<b>0.5</b>
or <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Health Science Technology (1.0)</li></ul>	
<b>Technology Applications</b> .....	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Fine Arts</b> .....	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Speech</b> .....	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Additional Components (elective courses)</b> .....	<b>2.5</b>
from <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the list of courses approved by the State Board of Education for Grades 9-12 (relating to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills),</li><li>state-approved innovative courses,</li><li>JROTC (1.0 to 4.0 credits), or</li><li>Driver Education (0.5)</li></ul>	
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b> .....	<b>26.0</b>
<b>Advanced Measures</b> <p>Students must complete four advanced measures as designated in the Distinguished Achievement Program graduation plan.</p>	

# Recommended Plan

26 Credits Required

<b>English Language Arts</b> .....	<b>4.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>English I, II, III, &amp; IV</li><li>Immigrant students with limited English proficiency may substitute <i>English I and II for Speakers of Other Languages</i> for English I and II.</li></ul>	
<b>Math</b> .....	<b>4.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and a fourth math course</li></ul>	
<b>Science</b> .....	<b>4.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Biology, Chemistry, and Physics plus an additional lab-based course*</li></ul>	
<b>Social Studies</b> .....	<b>3.5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>World History Studies (1.0),</li><li>World Geography Studies (1.0),</li><li>U.S. History Studies Since Reconstruction (1.0), and</li><li>U.S. Government (0.5)</li></ul>	
<b>Economics</b> .....	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Physical Education</b> .....	<b>1.5</b>
to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Foundations of Personal Fitness (0.5 with a limit of 2.0 credits)</li><li>Can substitute drill team, marching band, cheerleading, JROTC, athletics, Dance I-IV, approved private programs, or certain career and technology education courses</li></ul>	
<b>Languages other than English</b> .....	<b>2.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any two levels in the same language</li></ul>	
<b>Health Education</b> .....	<b>0.5</b>
or <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Health Science Technology (1.0)</li></ul>	
<b>Technology Applications</b> .....	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Fine Arts</b> .....	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Speech</b> .....	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Additional Components (elective courses)</b> .....	<b>3.5</b>
from <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the list of courses approved by the State Board of Education for Grades 9-12 (relating to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills),</li><li>state-approved innovative courses,</li><li>JROTC (1.0 to 4.0 credits), or</li><li>Driver Education (0.5)</li></ul>	
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b> .....	<b>26.0</b>
*Integrated Physics and Chemistry can satisfy one of the lab-science requirements through 2011–12.	

# Minimum Graduation\*\*

22 Credits Required

<b>English Language Arts</b> .....	<b>4.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>English I, II, &amp; III</li><li>Immigrant students with limited English proficiency may substitute <i>English I and II for Speakers of Other Languages</i> for English I and II.</li><li>Check with counselor for course options to satisfy fourth credit.</li></ul>	
<b>Math</b> .....	<b>3.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Algebra I, Geometry, and a third math course</li></ul>	
<b>Science</b> .....	<b>2.0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Biology and Integrated Physics &amp; Chemistry (IPC)</li></ul>	
<b>Social Studies</b> .....	<b>2.5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>World History Studies (1.0), or</li><li>World Geography Studies (1.0),</li><li>U.S. History Studies Since Reconstruction (1.0), and</li><li>U.S. Government (0.5)</li></ul>	
<b>Economics</b> .....	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Academic Elective</b> .....	<b>1.0</b>
selected from either <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>World History Studies, World Geography Studies, or any science course approved by the State Board of Education (If substituting Chemistry or Physics for IPC, you must use one of these as academic elective credit here.)</li></ul>	
<b>Physical Education</b> .....	<b>1.5</b>
to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Foundations of Personal Fitness (0.5 with a limit of 2.0 credits)</li><li>Can substitute drill team, marching band, cheerleading, JROTC, athletics, Dance I-IV, approved private programs, or certain career and technology education courses</li></ul>	
<b>Languages other than English</b> .....	<b>None</b>
<b>Health Education</b> .....	<b>0.5</b>
or <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Health Science Technology (1.0)</li></ul>	
<b>Technology Applications</b> .....	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Fine Arts</b> .....	<b>None</b>
<b>Speech</b> .....	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Additional Components (elective courses)</b> .....	<b>5.5</b>
from <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the list of courses approved by the State Board of Education for Grades 9-12 (relating to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills),</li><li>state-approved innovative courses,</li><li>JROTC (1.0 to 4.0 credits), or</li><li>Driver Education (0.5)</li></ul>	
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b> .....	<b>22.0</b>
**Graduation under this plan requires the approval of the student’s parents and high school administrator.	

# Graduation Checklist

Reach Your Goal

- Keep track of your high school credits to be sure you will meet all local and state requirements by the end of your senior year.
- Consider taking Advanced Placement or dual enrollment courses to earn college credit while still in high school.
- Begin keeping a list of the awards and honors you receive (handy for scholarship applications) as well as extracurricular activities.
- During your sophomore year, begin researching the universities or colleges you are interested in attending. Check what prerequisites are required for admittance and any time lines required for applications.
- Explore your interests and take advantage of Career Day opportunities.
- If you are not sure what college or university you are interested in, attend the college nights hosted by your high school. While you have the opportunity, be sure to talk with school representatives about what types of financial aid may be available.
- If possible, take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) in your sophomore year for practice, but in your junior year, take the PSAT for eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. Students who take the PSAT tend to score higher on the SAT than those who do not.
- Check with your counselor’s office to learn about available scholarships. Be sure to begin applying early and for as many scholarships as possible. Do not limit yourself just to local scholarships.
- Sign up and take the ACT and/or SAT test, preferably in your junior year but no later than the fall of your senior year.